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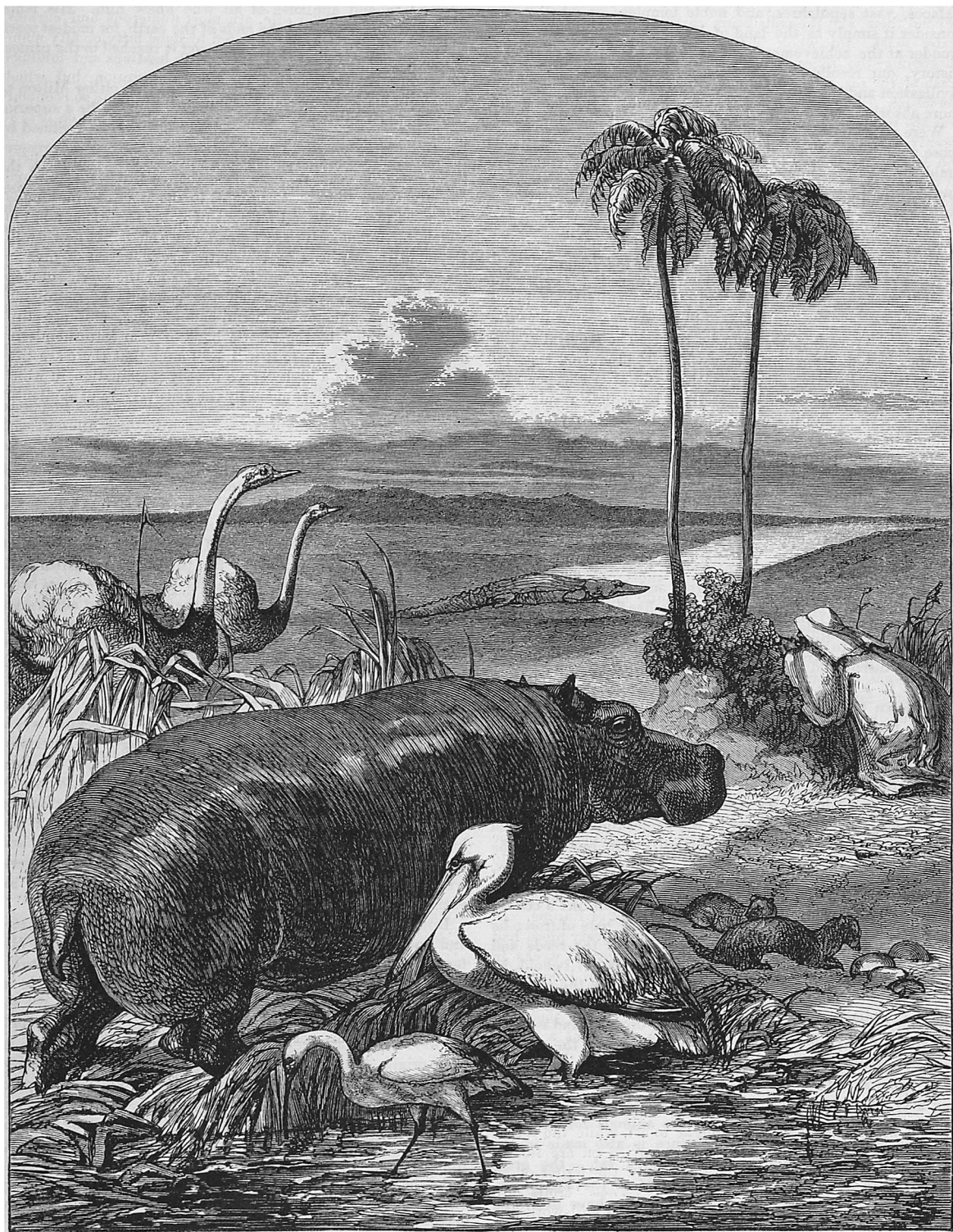
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WILD ANIMALS PECULIAR TO THE VALLEY OF THE NILE.

EGYPT, the mother of nations and birth-place of the arts, is an interesting object from whatever point of sight we view it. Whether we consider it as the most ancient of dynasties of

of the early world—for to Egypt the Jews, as yet but wandering shepherds, went to purchase corn, and found it a highly civilized country, possessing abundance of food and an intelli-



GROUP OF ANIMALS AS ARRANGED FOR EXHIBITION IN THE NEW PALACE AT SYDENHAM.

which we have any knowledge—for Herodotus speaks of the Pyramids as having existed before the nations of Europe possessed written records; whether we view it as the great granary

gent population; whether we look upon it as the great, and perhaps only, commercial country in the time of Abraham—for we are especially told that Egypt possessed many cities,

great buildings, chariots, horses, and cattle, and that it was a land full of people, and that thither came the travellers of all nations to buy and sell; whether we regard it as the patron and originator of the kindred arts of sculpture, architecture, and painting—for the researches of modern times have abundantly proved, that while Europe and the western world were yet in a state of primeval barbarism, Egypt possessed imperial palaces, vast sepulchres, and noble temples; or whether we consider it simply as the land of Ham, the son of Noah, our wonder at the achievements of its people, our interest in its history, our recollection of the influence it has had in the civilization and refinement of the world, become only greater, more absorbing, and more intense.

Were we to pursue this train of thought, we might speedily loose ourself in the mazes of the past, and wander blindfold amid the mysteries of monuments, and sepulchre, and palace, and desert; but a glance at the picture brings us at once to the banks of the old Nile, and to the subject we have before us—the Wild Animals peculiar to Egypt.

The valley of the Nile is everywhere, on both sides of the stream, covered with the remains of Egypt's departed magnificence, especially where the river forms the famous Delta; and the past still lives in the ruined temple of Carnac and the desolated plains in which the pyramids still stand, the wonder of mankind. But while all is changed, and while Egypt among the nations is considered but a third or fourth rate power, the natural characteristics of the country remain the same. The Nile still annually overflows its banks, and fertilises the surrounding plains; the sands of those apparently interminable deserts over which the Israelites of old pursued their weary way, still rise in burning clouds to terrify and overwhelm the traveller; the corn and the fig-tree still grow in the rich valleys and on the steep hill sides as they did when the brethren of Joseph went thither from the famine-stricken tents of Israel. The men who built the pyramids have departed, and none are acquainted even with their names; but the pyramids remain, silent and grey and desolate as of old. The divine spirit of the great architects has fled away, but the work of their hands remaineth. The Nile flows down from the mountains to the sea, just as it did when the daughter of Pharaoh discovered the child Moses floating on its surface, cradled in a little ark of bulrushes; and the wild animals come down nightly now to quench their thirst in its waters even as they did then. Man only has changed.

In the oldest written record,—the Book of Job, "all people's book," as Carlyle emphatically styles it,—reference is made to the animals through whom God declareth his power—the wild goats and hinds, the wild ass, the unicorn, the peacock, the ostrich, the horse, the hawk, the eagle, the crocodile, and the hippopotamus. See how eloquently and how truly the sacred writer describes the latter animal:—"Behold now, *Behemoth*, which I made with thee; he eateth grass as an ox; his strength is in his loins; he moveth his tail like a cedar; his bones are as strong pieces of brass and bars of iron; he lieth under the shady trees in the coolest of the reeds and fens; the willow of the brook compass him about; behold, he drinketh up a river and tasteth not." And then the alligator or crocodile—"Canst thou draw out *Leviathan* with a hook, or his tongue with a cord which thou lettest down?" and with no less truthfulness are the ostriches and pelicans of the wilderness described—"The ostrich which leaveth her eggs in the earth and warmeth them in the dust, and forgetteth that the foot may crush them, or that the wild beast may break them;" and the pelican, which was among the animals forbidden to be eaten by the Israelites. Reference is also made in the Scriptures to the ichneumon,—Pharaoh's rat,—the great enemy of the crocodile, and the sacred ibis of the Egyptians, a species of the stork which is supposed to have delivered Egypt from the plague of serpents. In fact, in speaking or writing on Natural History it is impossible not to recognise the sacred writings as a very high authority indeed. We can reach to no higher knowledge, says the venerable Humboldt, than that of which the Egyptians possessed the living germs; we can only amplify and improve.

REMINISCENCES OF A GENIUS.

A FEW years immediately prior to the celebrated battle of Waterloo, a period replete with stirring events, and remarkable for the number of illustrious men in all professions and pursuits, there flourished, in a town in the south-east of Ireland, a genius, whose natural talents, fostered by education, won the admiration and applause of all who knew him. His fame, indeed, did not extend to the ends of the earth, for modest merit ever shrinks from the public gaze; yet it reached to the utmost limits of the county in which he dwelt.

As a poet he was undoubtedly inferior to either Milton or Byron; yet he was universally acknowledged to be a superior *melodist* to Moore. Still, had not his talents been confined by the circumstances of the place in which he happened to receive his education, and his energies cramped, as too often is the case, by an imperious necessity, it must be said that no poet could have soared so high, or gone so near to heaven's gate in the sublimity of his flights. But the talent in which he excelled was music. In this his natural genius shone forth with a lustre unrivalled. If Handel had but heard him he must have stood entranced with our hero's delicious compositions; and while he listened in ecstasy, with swelling heart and tearful eye, to the rich volume of sound improvised by this heaven-taught artist, the great master of music would not have disdained to have embodied his conceptions in a far nobler production than that of his celebrated "Harmonious Blacksmith." As a vocalist the subject of these remarks surpassed his competitors by many degrees. Even Braham himself, with all his richness of voice and power of expression, could not be heard beside him. Whenever he chose to pour forth the thrilling power of his song, every other sound must of necessity be hushed, every other voice silent. Nor was it easy to know which to admire most—the brilliancy, beauty, and elegance of his execution, or the sweetness and pathos of that music which he seemed to compose at will. But this did not constitute his whole merit. His accomplishments and acquirements were so many and various, that he was the delight and admiration of every beholder, and the entertainment of every company.

We need not stop to inquire why most clever people are oddities. Whether it is that talent is scarce, or that the possessor presumes too much upon that wherein he excels—the truth, however, must be confessed, that the subject of these memoirs, like too many of the sons of genius, was a fanciful and capricious creature. If you sought the entertainment and delight you expected from his society, it was then he became sullen and morose; if you asked him to gratify you with a specimen of his vocal powers and his enchanting music, he would probably retire to his apartment as if you had given him some offence. But when the fit was over, and the sun again shone forth, then would he exert his powers, without further solicitation, and hold the attention of an entire company in breathless admiration.

Doubtless, my young readers are anxious to learn the name and lineage of such a strange yet admirable personage. His family was certainly respectable, being as old as the creation, but we never heard anything very particularly remarkable in any of his ancestors, nor, indeed, any of his name, till we met with him. There was one peculiarity, however, which we were very nearly omitting, namely, that though humble in their origin, every one of his kindred that came to maturity, invariably rose in the world, except himself, and that, singular to say, it was his superior talent which effectually put a bar to his advancement in that way. As to his name, it was humble like his birth; yet it has had talent connected with it, from Thomas Aquinas, down to Thomas Moore. His style and title was THOMAS LARK, Esq., but he was more generally known among his friends, and acquaintances, and admirers by the familiar name of "Tommy."

"And so," we think we hear our readers exclaim, "after all, it is but a poor insignificant sky-lark."

Very true, indeed; but if you had seen and heard that same sky-lark, as we and hundreds of others have, you would be delighted to make his acquaintance.